WRITTEN BY CAUCASIAN UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

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(There was some disturbance in one of the Centers recently. In explaining what happened, one of our former students mentions these conditions: dread of the F. B. I., espionage, Nisei accused of being spies for the F. B. I., beatings of Nisei by Nisei, absence of officials at critical moments, circulation of lists of persons alleged to be disloyal to the Japanese. I thought a part of my letter might be of interest to others of our students.)

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1. There does not seem to be a feeling in other Centers that the F. B. I. is waiting to snatch innocent persons on the accusations of unscrupulous spies.

2. There is, in your letter a feeling of fear, of injustice, of being watched by unknown persons (not personally, but on the part of the people) which I do not find in letters from other Centers.

3. I have heard of no other flagrant case of Nisei spying upon their own people.

4. It is difficult to understand how officials could be so little aware of what is going on in a Center thatthey would be absent at a critical time.

5. When a quiet, scholarly, likeable, reasonable, level-headed, "family" type of person like the writer of the letter is made to feel "suspected" by persons of his own race, who come to him with the news that he is under observation, there must be reasons, since the person referred to is of the highest character.

From these observations, I will try to find an explanation for what seems a confused and contradictory condition.

It strikes me as very odd that I know more about what goes on in the Centers than those who live in them. There seems to be very little frank exchange of ideas between people in different Centers. It seems strange that a minor issue (Nisei and Issei representation, since the Center is, after all, run by the W. R. A.) should cause so much excitement when it is so far from the real problems of trying to bring the American Japanese into the main stream of American life. I am further surprised to find that in six to eight months of discomfort, no leader has arisen among the college-trained men and women to explain the larger problem of race relationship to the American Japanese and make the kind of plans for the future which take in all the facts, and which make sense in terms of the war and of American life. Also, when I think of the brilliant minds among the Nisei, I find it difficult to understand how they can show so little interest either in the actual news or in the major issues behind the war. When I read an outstanding article like that written by Mr. Miyamoto of the University of Washington, I know that the Nisei do have the minds and have the leaders. (A copy of this article, in the September Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science was sent to each of the Centers, care of the Head Librarian) Then why are such persons not the leaders in fact? Why are they not at the present establishing the policies for the future of the Japanese in America?

There is no one answer which will explain all these facts, but there is one answer which explains them better than any other. It is very painful for me to come to this conclusion, because of the love I have for Paul and Hana, and Shizuo, and George, and Elma, and Walter, and Suzuko, and Hiroo, and Ruby, and Kumiko and Asami, and Chizuru, and many, many more. But it seems clear to me that the reason they, and men like Shotaro Miyamoto are not the leaders is that the people will not follow them. And the reason that they will not follow them is that the Nisei I have mentioned have committed themselves, in their souls; in their hopes, their plans for themselves and their children and their children's children, for better or worse, to America. They have made their choice; but there are others, perhaps the majority, who have not made their choice, who do not want to have to choose, or who want to try to avoid a choice by moving away from their own people entirely. I cannot help feeling that Yamato daimashi explains a lot; and where it is not Yamato daimashi, I believe there is a tendency to wait and see how things will turn out before giving one's loyalties. I suppose this natural and human, but I fear that those who wait until it is all over to make up their minds will find that they have waited too long. If the Nisei stand with us now, with their hearts and hands, the Caucasians will remember that. And if the Nisei wait to find out who is going to win, it will be remembered that they waited.

In the meantime, the spirit of Yamato daimashi can find ways to unsettle people's minds, create rows and disturbances, doubt and suspicion. Yamato daimashi cares nothing for the future of the American Japanese, because to Yamato daimashi there are no such people--only Japanese. It would be very helpful to Yamato daimashi to have a good massacre or even a first-class riot among the American Japanese, particularly if the Caucasians could be persuaded to shoot a goodly number of women and children. Such an incident would have wonderful propaganda value. Yamato daimashi explains so many things that at first it seems to explain everything--which of course it does not. But let's look at the list: urging people not to work, because they will be exploited by the heartless Caucasians; taking advantage of administrative mistakes to cause "incidents"; spreading vicious rumors (from Heart Mountain: Togo Tanaka was killed at Manzanar; from Amache: all the people at Manzanar are going to be moved again this winter--an idea which would keep them stirred up all winter long) which turn out to be false, but are replaced by other ingenious lies, all of them harmful to morale; blaming the Jews for the war (the old Axis trick of weakening a country through disunity); waving Japanese flags where they will be seen and reported in the papers so that the public will be turned against the Nisei; praising Axis victories before the Young people, and saying that if you know the "inside" the Americans can't fight and are getting beaten all the time; told they are too old or too foreign to be given responsibility, though their children may; refusing to show respect during the playing of the Star Spangled Banner; and finally, and most important, spreading rumors and insinuations about the Nisei who trust and work with the Caucasians, and have committed themselves most completely to this country, in order to---

"once a Japanese, always a Japanese", "they aren't really Americans, you can never trust them" etc. These are the tactics, well tested and tried, of the Black Dragons. They are the methods used to rule Japan. "hy not (?) Centers?

Though most of the Centers are peaceful, and resigned, and there have been very few "incidents" the same division of opinion exists in each, and as time goes on there may be more "incidents". The only protection the truly American Nisei has against yellow lists, green lists, insinuations, warnings, even beatings is the Caucasian management and the F. B. I.--until and unless he takes the authority and develops a policy befitting his future life in this country. The Nisei are not organized, they are young, they are not accustomed to politics, they have not had experience with "terrorist" tactics, they are confused by the evacuation, which has made many of them doubt whether America wants them all, they do not read what their friends write, they do not know what is happening in this country, they are only dimly conscious that the most decisive moment of their lives has come, they have no certain leaders and are afraid to follow those they have. Well--there's opportunity for you!

You may think from what I have written that I am putting all the blame on the Japanese. This is not so. This is no time for "blame"; it is a time for plans. And you must know from what day soon when my friends and students can return to their native state and resume their occupations as free citizens. I want them as friends and neighbors, I want my children to know their virtues, and I hope someday to teach their children. And I do not quite see how this can come to pass until people like yourselves seize the leadership of their people. All that has happened is not surprise to the leaders of the Student Nisei. We still remember the two-thirds who showed no interest--and what they said and did.

A plan:

1. Organize "information or reading" groups, restricting membership to those who want very much to know the facts of these times.
2. Try to get as members persons who are committed to America or who would be if they can make up their minds they have a future here. As a group, make your opinion felt.
3. Urge the Nisei to make a choice, to leave the Centers and help the country in any way they are able.
4. Explain to those who leave that they will meet certain difficulties, and tell them how to meet them. Each is representing his people. Prepare them.
5. Take the lead. Disregard threats, inertia, phychological sabotage, obvious Axis propaganda. (the Jews caused the war, etc.)